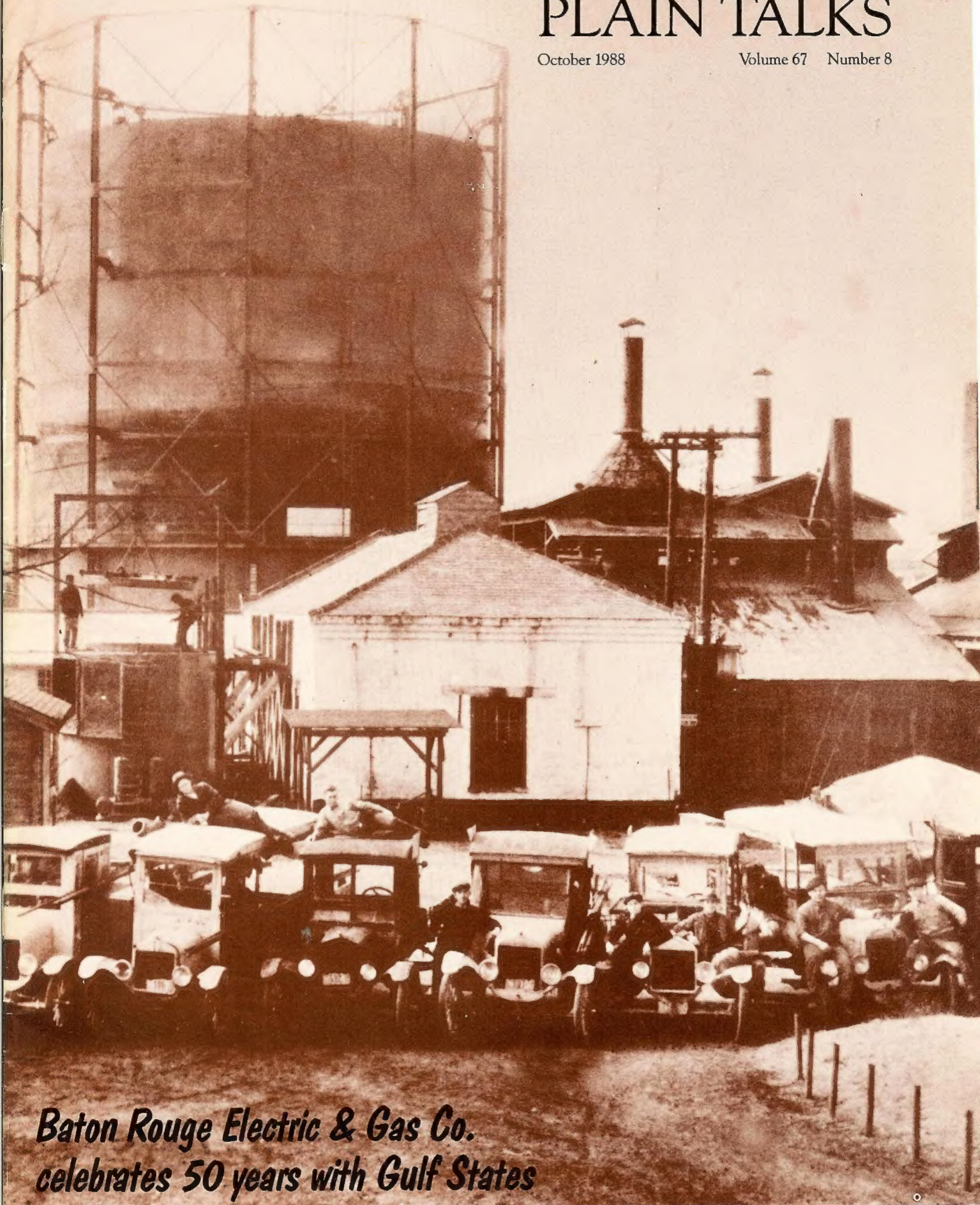


PLAIN TALKS

October 1988

Volume 67 Number 8



*Baton Rouge Electric & Gas Co.
celebrates 50 years with Gulf States*

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Number 8

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These two Port Arthur Division Sideliners, like those pictured on page 3, met in Lake Arthur, La., to reminisce about old times. Retirees from all over Gulf States met at the annual Sideliners get-together.

On the cover, the Baton Rouge Gas Plant, circa 1925, manufactured gas from coal to light the gas lamps around Baton Rouge. The plant was located at Laurel and 12th Streets. This year the Baton Rouge Gas and Electric Departments celebrate 50 years as part of the Gulf States system. See more about the Gas Department beginning on page 7.

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October 1988

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Employees who change residences or offices should fill out company mailing-address-forms (GSU0012-00-81) and return them to the mailroom in the Edison Plaza. GSU publications, departmental mailings and other company information are not automatically forwarded; addresses must be corrected when employees move.

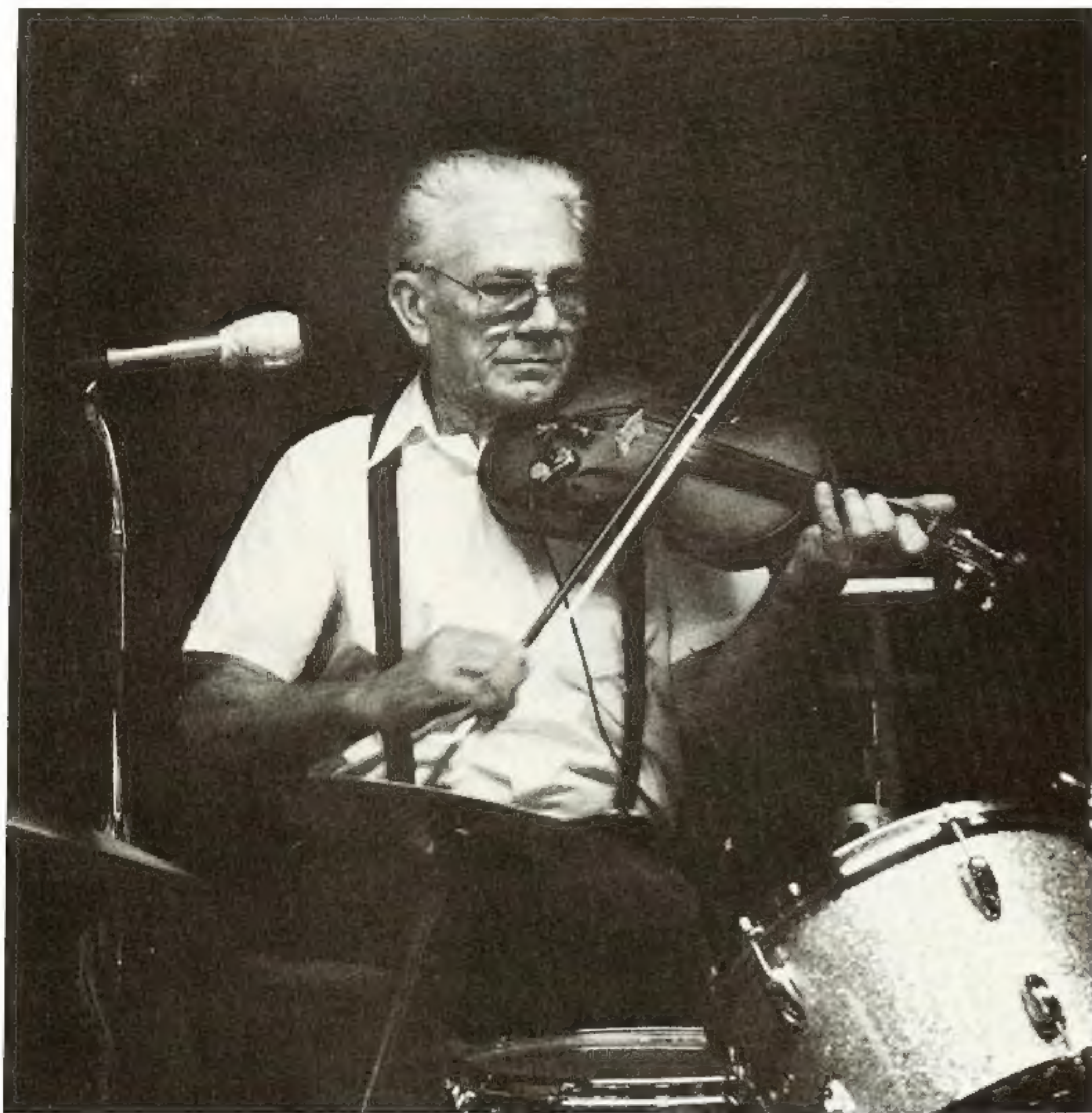


Retirees reminisce at Sideliners meeting.



Top, the Baton Rouge Division Sideliners Club; above right, Lake Charles; right, Western Division; below, Beaumont Sideliners. Representatives of the Port Arthur club are pictured on page 2.





Ed Sanchez

Is there life after retirement?

Is there life after retirement? You bet, say many retirees.

Take for example Ed Sanchez, who retired in October 1984 after nearly 37 years in the Baton Rouge substation department.

Sanchez spends his retirement virtually the same way he previously spent his after-hours time — playing the big band sounds of the late '40s and '50s. Currently, he plays drums and fiddle for *Murphy's Good Time Band*, a three-piece outfit available for booking.

Making music has been Sanchez's only hobby since he joined GSU 40 years ago. Christmas 1948, Sanchez and his work buddies were visiting a Baton Rouge night club. Instruments sat on stage ready to play, but no band was scheduled. Sanchez's musically-talented buddies picked up the instruments and began to perform.

Sanchez filled in at drums even though he had never drummed before. From there, Sanchez says, he "kept at it and didn't quit."

Sanchez's first five-piece band, *The Stardusters*, practiced twice a week and played local engagements on weekends. He led a series of five- and six-piece bands for the next 30 years. "We made pretty good money," he adds. "It was mighty fine when our music was in."

Changes in music styles and the oil bust have combined to make booking for five-piece bands difficult. Groups and clubs prefer to hire smaller outfits like *Murphy's Good Time Band*. But extra money is no longer Sanchez's motivating factor for playing. "When you get to be our age," he says referring to his 73- and 59-year-old music partners, "you play because you like it."

Jimmy Daigle retired on June 1, 1986, scheduled his last few weeks of vacation, and began wearing the badge of Lafayette Parish Deputy Sheriff before his vacation ended.

Law enforcement is a far cry from the electric utility business where Daigle spent most of his life, but in one respect his new job is similar.

"I may be in New Orleans tomorrow and in Baton Rouge the next day. It's like working on a service truck, you never know where you're going to be."

A 40-year veteran of Gulf States, the retired service supervisor transports prisoners from the Lafayette Parish Correctional Center to other correctional facilities around Louisiana, to parole board hearings, to hospitals, "to wherever we've got to go," he says. "It's a very, very interesting job."

Why not spend his retirement at



Jimmy Daigle

leisure? "If I'm home, I'm working at home," he says referring to his two and one-half acre garden. "You get up in the morning and know something that you're going to do today is meaningful. It helps you get out of bed." He adds that he has no plans to take it easy.

While Daigle likes his job as deputy sheriff, he says he "enjoyed every bit of my whole life at Gulf States. It's a good company to work for and good people to be with."

The friendly Cajun stays in close contact with Gulf States and his work buddies. After delivering prisoners to Lake Charles, he often stops at the GSU office to "drink coffee with the gang." He also attended the appeal of the Gulf States rate case in Baton Rouge.

He talks with pride about his job with the sheriff's office and the excellent certification of the correctional center. He points out that it is

the only facility of its kind in Louisiana to be accredited by the American Correctional Association.

Says Lt. Sour Duhon, who works with Daigle in the transportation department: "Daigle's a first class gentleman. We like to have him around here."

Paybacks are wonderful, according to Mildred Tribble. Tribble, who took early retirement from the Marketing Department in September 1986, hasn't had time to get bored. She spends her retirement repaying certain organizations for the pleasures they afforded her during her 41 years at Gulf States.

Throughout her working life, Tribble attended opening nights at symphony concerts and museums and worshipped at her church at her leisure. In her retirement, she's set a goal to use her education and

job-related skills to benefit those organizations. She now spends most of her time as a volunteer for the Art Museum of Southeast Texas and the Beaumont Symphony Women's League.

Soon after retirement, she enlisted in the Art Museum's docent training program, where she learned to conduct tours and interpret art exhibits for tour groups. Having completed her docent apprenticeship, the lively retiree serves as co-chairman of the museum's elementary education program. She updates her training through weekly art appreciation lessons and artist lectures.

Serving as a docent helps her accomplish another retirement goal: to enrich her knowledge of the visual arts. Tribble's docent training has given her new appreciation for the famous artworks she sees during her international travels.

Since retirement, she has traveled to the Scandinavian countries of Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland; the Soviet city of Leningrad; the South American countries of Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay; and the Central and Eastern European countries of Yugoslavia, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria.

She found her most recent trip to Eastern Block countries educational. The scenery in those communist countries was beautiful, she says, but the people were sullen. In Bulgaria, her tour group watched a traveling Russian circus. "It was the only time we saw people laugh," she adds.

Back in the U.S.A., Tribble also serves as vice-president of the Gallery Guild, a group which recruits volunteers for the Art Museum. She hopes to attract 250 new volunteers during this fall's Gallery Guild campaign.

The budget committee of the First Baptist Church of Beaumont has benefited from Tribble's budgeting experiences at Gulf States. "You make a budget at Gulf States, then you change it, then you change it and then you change it," she says. "That's exactly what you do on the budget committee at church."

Tribble says she prefers retirement to working full-time, but working for a living helps one appreciate retirement. "If you didn't have a working background, you couldn't be as useful or productive in retirement."



Mildred Tribble

Attention Texas Veterans



The Texas Veterans Land Board would like to inform you of your state Veterans benefits.



Texas Veterans Housing Assistance Program offers home buyers a \$20,000 30-year fixed rate loan at 9%.

Texas Veterans Home Improvement Program lends homeowners up to \$17,500 at 10.5% for up to 15 years.

Texas Veterans Land Program lends land buyers (5 acre minimum) up to \$20,000 at 8.75% for 30 years.

For more information & eligibility requirements call toll-free

These are state programs, not federal VA programs.

1-800-252-VETS

Paid for by Texas Veterans Land Board

If you are not a Veteran, please inform a Veteran.

For a brochure explaining these benefits, contact the Employee Relations representative at your location.

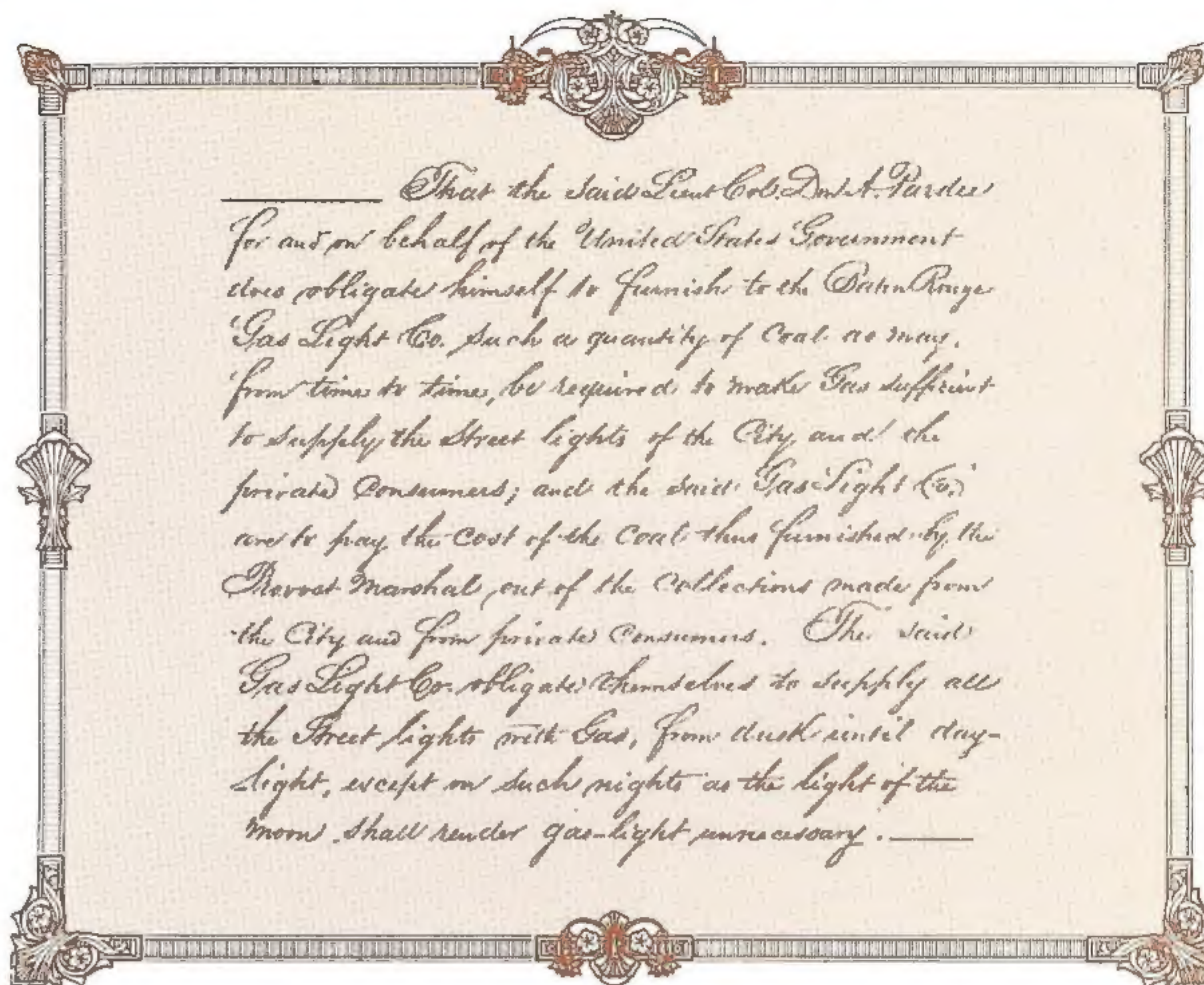
Providing gas from dusk to dawn

The Baton Rouge Division, including the Gas Department, celebrates its 50th anniversary as part of the Gulf States Utilities system this year. But the Division's history goes back much further.

The Baton Rouge Gas Light Co. was founded in 1859. The Baton Rouge Electric Light & Power Co. was founded in 1889. In 1900, the two merged to become Baton Rouge Electric & Gas Co. By 1907, the company was known simply as Baton Rouge Electric Co. It acquired Port Allen Electric Property and Denham Springs Utilities Co. in 1925 and 1929, respectively.

In 1938, BRECO became part of Gulf States Utilities.

Below, Edison Plaza museum curator Jill Street holds the Minute Book of the Baton Rouge Gas Light Co. The book contains notes from the company's charter and board meetings dating back to 1859. Above right, an excerpt from Jan. 4, 1864, when Union troops occupied the city.



Gas Department reminder

Time to light the furnace

by Ronnie Bordelon

The cool, crisp mornings of fall remind those with gas heating to have their home heating equipment checked and lighted.

Autumn is the busiest time of the year for Gulf States' Gas Department. About 100 to 150 customers will call the Gas Service Department each week when the mornings begin to turn cool. When the first cold snap arrives later in the season, as many as 600 customers will call to ask for their unit to be lighted.

If you plan to light your own gas-furnace at home, the safest bet is to follow the procedure used by Gas Department servicemen.

Upon arrival for a service check, the serviceman:

1. Checks the heater location to make sure that no combustible materials contact the unit and to ensure that the chamber and burners are clean.

2. Checks for proper ventilation and makes sure the exhaust vent is in good condition.

3. Checks filter and return air closet to make sure they are free from obstructions.

4. Turns control knob to *pilot* position and lights pilot.

5. Turns control knob to *on* position and adjusts thermostat for heating.

6. Watches to make sure the burner lights smoothly with an even, blue flame.

7. Monitors the unit as the temperature in the warm-air chamber rises to a set temperature. The blower then switches on and distributes warm-air through the ductwork into the house.

If the above procedures occur in sequence, the unit is ready for use. If any of the steps do not occur, the serviceman shuts the unit off and advises the customer to call a heating contractor to make the necessary repairs.



Display traces GSU's

by Ronnie Bordelon

When the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources told Gulf States that some exhibit space was available in its lobby, the Baton Rouge Gas Department jumped at the chance to promote its product.

Service foreman Ronnie Bordelon and engineering assistant Mike Creel designed a 16-foot-long by 4-foot-tall display that explains the path natural gas follows from the ground to the customer's home. On display indefinitely at the DNR building, 625 North 4th St., Baton Rouge, the exhibit also includes antiques such as a tin gas meter, a water heater and part of a wooden pipeline.

Serving 83,000 customers in East Baton Rouge Parish, the Gas Department traces its roots back further than any at GSU. Organized in 1859 as the Baton Rouge Gas Light Company, the company obtained a contract to install 80

street lights for the city and constructed a coke plant to manufacture gas. In 1927, a pipeline connected the company with the Monroe Gas Field in northern Louisiana, so a manufacturing plant was no longer needed. The company became part of Gulf States Utilities in 1938.

Ninety-five department employees now work from department headquarters adjacent to Choctaw Service Center.

Gulf States sells gas on a retail level only in Baton Rouge and competes for gas customers elsewhere in the system. How does the Gas Department affect the company's marketing operations? "Our total marketing program reflects our primary business, selling electricity," says Marketing vice-president Jim Moss. "We are very thoughtful to recommend the most efficient way to use energy over the long term."

The path

Graphics representative Linka Peveto sketched the display for *Plain Talks*. Ronnie Bordelon provided the explanations:

1. The rig drills through several layers of rock and sand to reach gas deposits.
2. Gas is extracted and transported by pipeline to the gas plant where impurities are removed.
3. At the compressor station, the gas is compressed and pumped through a high-pressure pipeline to various suppliers.
4. Suppliers then transport the gas to GSU or another distribution company. The gas is measured, regulated and odorized at the city gate station. Gas has no odor in its

1. Derrick well head

2. Gas plant

3. Compressor station

4. City gate station

Transmission pipeline

gas roots

f natural gas

natural state, so odorant is added to help detect leaks in the system.

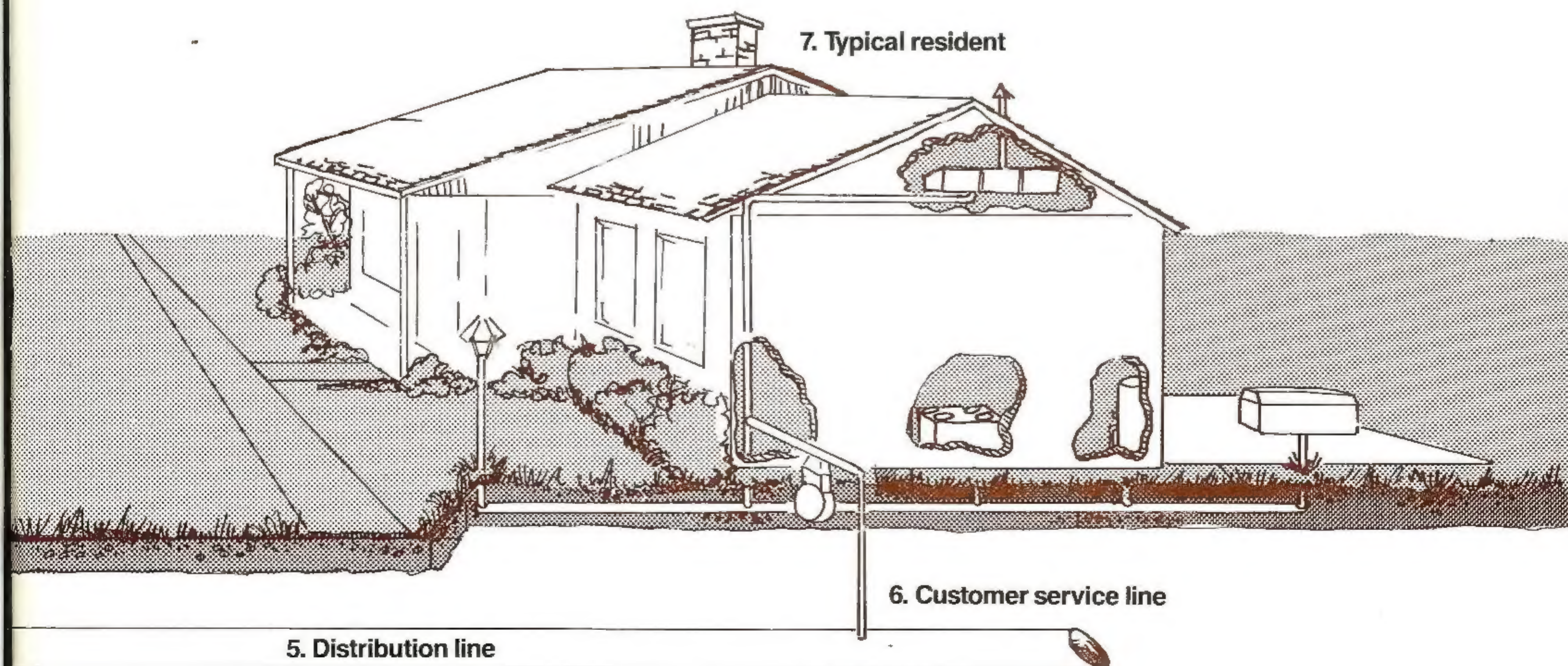
5. GSU's Gas Department transports the gas through intermediate pressure lines to customers throughout the city.

6. The gas reaches the customer's home through a service line. A regulator decreases the pressure and a meter measures the customer's consumption for billing purposes.

7. Inside the home, the gas provides efficient energy for appliances such as a range, water heater, central heating unit, room heaters, fire-place burner, barbecue grill, outdoor gas lights and pool heaters or spas.



Mike Creel holds an old gas pipeline cut from a cypress log, while Ronnie Bordelon points out the path natural gas follows from the well to the home. The two created the public exhibit on display in the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources building.





By being alert to happenings around him, Rodney Sparks helped police catch an arsonist whom police believe set eight fires on April 25.

Arsonist no match for Sparks

Although he doesn't drive a red truck, Rodney Sparks is a fire chief. And he has a certificate to prove it.

Sparks, serviceman-1st class, was named honorary Fire Chief of Baton Rouge by the Baton Rouge Fire Department for his actions which led to the April 25 arrest of a man who admitted setting 16 vacant house fires in the northern section of Baton Rouge.

Sparks is a troubleshooter, one of nine in Baton Rouge, who is called in emergencies, such as house fires and downed poles, to disconnect or repair electrical service. He and the other troubleshooters had a busy day on April 25.

"There's an arsonist working up north," the day shift troubleshooter told Sparks as he reported for his 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. shift. "I'll catch him," Sparks remembers joking. Sure enough, that evening police arrested a man who matched a

description given by Sparks.

After disconnecting service to the first burning house he was called to that evening, Sparks says he "looked eye to eye at a fellow in a car who just didn't look right." Sparks noticed the individual because a police officer at the scene ordered the man to move his car. Minutes later, Sparks was called to another fire. As he approached the second burning house, he saw the same car blocking his access. Sparks honked, and the driver slowly drove away, watching the fire as he drove. Sparks noted a description of the driver, make of the car and recorded its license number. He informed officers at the scene and followed through by describing the suspect and his car to the fire chief at a third fire that evening.

"They converged on him that night before he lit another house," Sparks says. "He had set three or

four fires that day and three or four that evening."

Without Sparks' help, says BRFD chief fire investigator Glenn Sevier, authorities probably would not have caught the suspect so easily. "It was the only lead we had." Sevier said Sparks handled the situation just as a firefighter would. "We ask our firefighters to be aware ... be aware of the situation around them. Look for anything unusual around the scene and take notes."

It's not the first time in his work that Sparks has helped take a bite out of crime. In his six years as a troubleshooter, he has stopped two purse snatchers, caught a car thief and a shoplifter. Why does he see so much excitement in his job?

"I watch what's going on around me," he says. "You have to when you work at night. We're in a lot of places most people don't go."

Divisions highlight customer service

"What are we celebrating?" asked many customers as they walked into the Port Arthur office on Aug. 5.

"You — the customer," was the reply from Gulf States. The Port Arthur Division celebrated "Customer Appreciation Day" to remind customers that they are important — and not taken for granted ... and to boost the morale of customer contact employees. Port Arthur employees chose a busy day, the first Friday of the month, to greet customers and offer them coffee, lemonade and lollipops. Banners reading "Your business is appreciated" hung above the cashiers.

It was a nice surprise for the customers, many of whom were thankful for the cool lemonade as a respite from the outside heat.

"This made my day," one customer replied.

Sue Williams, supervisor of customer services, says the day was a success. "We feel this extra effort gave the customers a neighborly feeling toward their electric company," she says. "This is something we can do inexpensively and sporadically so the customers won't expect it."

The event is in keeping with the renewed emphasis on customer service based on recommendations from the Customer Relations Task Force. Divisions have implemented some suggestions from last year's task force and are scheduled to implement others in the coming months.

In Baton Rouge, the Essen Lane office catered to a younger group as thousands of students flocked into town to begin college at Louisiana State and Southern Universities. Each August, students crowd the Essen Lane office to apply for service to their off-campus homes.

This year, based on a suggestion from the task force, the office



Brenda Broussard serves lemonade to customers during Customer Appreciation Day in Port Arthur. The Division held a similar event at the Mid-county office. One customer was so excited, says Sue Williams, she contributed an extra amount to Project CARE.

extended its weekday hours and opened on a Saturday to accommodate the influx during college registration.

"It's an attempt on our part to have better customer relations and make it easier for the customer to obtain service," says Jack Judice, coordinator of customer credit.

Customer accounting personnel worked with the Baton Rouge Apartment Owners Association and distributed flyers announcing the extra hours to apartment complexes and business establishments around the campuses.

During the week of registration, a banner hung outside to welcome students into the decorated office. A local fast-food restaurant supplied snacks.

Turnout for the extended hours during summer and fall registration was light, but Judice expects greater use of the program as more students and families become aware of it.

"Our whole purpose of the extra

hours was to allow students a different time to come in," says Judice. "This is not only good for students, but it's good for parents who are moving their kids in on a weekend."

One of the customers that Saturday morning was a student from Tampa, Fla., and his father. "The father was amazed," Judice notes, "that a utility company would be open on Saturday to accommodate students."

Another project in Baton Rouge is the customer upgrade program, where a meterman walks through a neighborhood checking the service connection of each home. This program has two advantages, Judice says. "First, they're making contact with the customer. The customer is excited that we're concerned enough to check their service. Second, we see that their connections are properly installed. If the meterman finds a problem, he relays it to the service department."



Mobil Megawatts

Oil refinery will add
to GSU power grid

by Robert Adams

Bucking a trend in recent years among some of GSU's large industrial customers to move toward cogeneration or self-generation and away from the GSU grid, the Mobil Oil Refinery in Beaumont soon will buy electrical power from us.

"Refining takes so much heat and produces so much steam that generation of electricity makes sense," says Ken Sandberg, industrial accounts manager-Texas, explaining why the refinery was not connected to GSU. "They have been like an island in our service area and have produced their own electricity."

An expansion project at the refinery soon will add a Continuous Catalytic Reformer, which uses a 10,000 horsepower motor to drive a compressor. "The power generation of the refinery is like a small utility," says Sandberg, "with a reserve margin and so forth. When load begins to grow into the

margin, they must look at other alternatives. They must decide whether to build additional generation or buy from us."

Sandberg says Mobil's project will add about 7½ megawatts of load to GSU's system. He adds that even more significant than the almost \$2 million in additional revenue to GSU, the project is expected to bring the opportunity to compete for additional load at Mobil in the future.

"The interconnection between Mobil and GSU is the key," says Sandberg. "Mobil is a big guy - big in load and big in resources. Now, when they decide to add new load, we have a chance to compete for it that we did not have before."

A part of GSU's \$3.5 million project to supply power to Mobil is the new Carroll Street Substation, containing two 50 MVA transformers. Tom Crowe, director - electrical, instrument and controls

engineering, acts as project manager. "We built in the capability for expansion at Mobil's request. In a few years, Mobil may be faced with the choice of replacing their cogeneration or buying more power from us."

Sandberg says Mobil's decision to buy from GSU speaks well for our competitiveness. "Even in our financial condition and under the greatest public scrutiny, this shows we are competitive or we would not be doing these things."

GSU's construction of the new substation and the two lines feeding it proceeds on schedule and within budget, according to Crowe. "We are using the project team approach, which focuses the attention of several departments on this specific project. And we have plans to handle contingencies, so the substation will be in service by Nov. 1, the scheduled date."

Aerobic Exercise

Developing your personal aerobics plan

You're convinced — aerobic exercise can strengthen your heart, improve your body's use of oxygen, and contribute to your overall health. So, where do you begin? First, find your target heart range (THR). Then select aerobic activities that fit your physical condition, personal interests, and environment. Finally, make a commitment to exercise aerobically for 20-30 minutes a minimum of 3 times a week.

Finding your THR







Your THR is the safest range of heartbeats per minute during exercise. To find your approximate THR, subtract your age from 220 and multiply the answer by 60% and by 80%. Aim for the low range when you first begin, gradually working up to the higher range. Count your heartbeats by taking your wrist or neck pulse for 15 seconds and multiplying the count by 4. If you have an existing medical condition or family history of heart disease, your healthcare professional can determine your best THR.

Choosing the right aerobics

With so many activities to choose from, you may not know which aerobics are best for you. In most cases, the best activities are those that you will enjoy and will keep up with. They are also the ones that are appropriate for your age and physical condition. The list of aerobic activities at right can help you with your choices.

Scheduling time for aerobics

In order to be effective, aerobics should be done for at least 20-30 minutes a minimum of 3 times a week. In less time than the average TV "sitcom" you can actively enjoy yourself while you improve your health. You can also find ways to fit aerobics into your busy schedule — walk during lunch, bicycle to work, invite a friend to a game of handball rather than out for drinks. It's a question of priorities. When you set fitness and health as a personal priority, you'll find time for fitness.

ACTIVITY	BENEFITS	DRAWBACKS
Walking 	Excellent overall conditioner; can be done by almost anyone.	Takes most people longer to reach THR; can be harder to fit into busy schedules.
Jogging/Running 	Excellent overall conditioner. Requires no equipment other than shoes.	Can stress bones and joints; can be too strenuous for beginners/overweight persons.
Swimming 	Exercises large muscles in legs, arms and chest; does not stress bones and joints.	Must have access to pool; may be poor choice for people with chlorine sensitivity.
Bicycling 	Exercises large muscles in legs; does not stress bones and joints.	Must purchase equipment; can be difficult to pursue in poor weather or in very hilly areas.
Aerobic Dancing 	Excellent overall conditioner; can be done in class and/or at home.	Requires instruction (class, videotape, etc.); high-impact can stress bones and joints.
Handball/Racquetball 	Excellent overall conditioner when done correctly; a social activity.	Requires partner, equipment and facilities; can be too strenuous for beginners.

Reaping the rewards

Once you've made the commitment to a regular aerobic exercise program, you'll know that you're doing one of the nicest things possible for yourself — you're strengthening your heart, keeping your body in shape, and improving your quality of life. You'll have more stamina, a brighter outlook, and a sense of commitment and control over life that will enable you to handle life's daily challenges.



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Edison Plaza Museum offers Teacher's Guide

Do you have a child in school who'd like to learn about electricity? Do you know a teacher who's always looking for creative ways to enrich his or her lesson plan? Send them the *Teacher's Guide to Edison Plaza Museum*, available from museum curator Jill Street.

The 16-page booklet helps elementary and secondary school teachers prepare themselves and their students for field trips to the museum. It provides instructional hints and games to prepare them before their visit, serves as a museum guide and offers suggested teaching activities after the visit.

The museum is housed in the old Travis Street substation next to Edison Plaza, GSU's headquarters. It has the "largest collection of electric memorabilia west of the Mississippi River" and is one of several conveniently-located museums in downtown Beaumont. So far in 1988, some 3,100 students from 122 schools have toured the museum.

The guide was printed in-house and prepared by Street, Jo Nell Barrett, Sam Bethea, Linka Peveto and Sue Williams.

For a copy of the *Teacher's Guide*, contact Jill Street at 733-4089 or (409) 838-6631 x4089.



Left, a schoolteacher conducts an electrical experiment at the Edison Plaza museum during a Region V workshop in July. Correspondent Barbara Broussard reports the workshop was one of several in which Sue Williams, supervisor-Customer Services-Port Arthur, and Jo Nell Barrett, customer information coordinator-Beaumont, helped to teach the teachers about electricity.

Above, a group at the 9th annual Energy Institute at Lamar University learn the basics of electricity through hands-on activity. The 23 teachers also heard guest lecturers and toured River Bend and Nelson Station, a refinery, a lignite mine and an offshore oil rig.

MAILBOX



Minority business development

"We are truly pleased to see that Gulf States Utilities understands the significance of minority business development and how it relates to the total economic development efforts of our cities, region and state," writes Audwin Samuel, project manager for the Triplex Minority Business Development Center, to **Roy Dautat**, manager of purchasing. Dautat and purchasing agents, **Elizabeth Smith** and **Jerry Steger**, represented Gulf States at the seminar. "Through the seminar," writes Samuel, "some clear channels of communication were opened. This allowed for some of the perceived barriers to be torn down, opening the door for the establishment of some valuable business relationships."

Also, thanking Dautat was E.J. Gaspard, president of the Greater Port Arthur Chamber of Commerce. "The role you played enabled us to achieve an outstanding success," Gaspard writes.

Quick action

Wallisville Volunteer Fire Department Chief Roy Frazar writes to Gulf States Anahuac office to recognize a job well done by a line crew during a recent trailer fire. Without "quick action and intelligent thinking," the fire could have been a total loss. "Thanks again and I am truly sorry that through all the excitement we got away without getting the names of these men. They truly are to be commended for their action," the chief writes. According to Winnie District superintendent **Buddy Johnson**, members of the quick-thinking crew were **Bob Albrecht**, utility foreman, and linemen-1st class **David Lee**, **Mark Jordan** and **Dennis Dunn**.

Service and kindness

"We are so pleased with the service and kindness during our move to our new home," writes an Opelousas area customer to the Lafayette office. "It's a pleasure to do business with a company that still treats you like a person and not a number."

Cajun Crab Festival

"I would like to extend our deepest gratitude to you and Gulf States Utilities for the services you have rendered in the past two years to set us up for our festival," writes Diane LeBlanc, president of the Cajun Crab Festival of Henderson to **Russell Thomassee**, line supervisor-Lafayette. "It is very hard to find this kind of dedication in today's hard economic times. We, the board of directors of the Cajun Crab Festival, would like you to know that we are grateful for people like yourself."

Fine crew

Craig Lively, assistant chief engineer at KJAC-TV, Channel 4, in Beaumont, thanks Vidor superintendent **Ronnie Hale** for the "expedient and professional manner in which you and your service crew handled the power outage at our Vidor transmitter site." An afternoon thunderstorm damaged lines to the transmitter causing the station to lose its signal. Lively says the Gulf States crew was making repairs even before KJAC personnel arrived to assess the damage. "Your field crew made the extra effort to personally inform our chief engineer of the ... progress of the repairs as well as providing an accurate estimate of the time it would take to get us back on line ... Hats off to the fine crew who worked so hard to get us back in service as quickly as humanly possible," Lively writes.

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Pro baseball's first night game may have been played in BR

By Mike Mulhern/
Special to the State-Times

The wedding vows between Thomas Edison's fabulous invention and Wrigley Field's version of the national pastime were pronounced early last night in Chicago amidst much fanfare, rejoicing and sorrow.

However, two hours and 10 minutes later (slightly quicker than some marriages make it), the short marriage was officially over, ended by a downpour.

With all the hoopla surrounding the lighting of the ancient park, one must wonder what happened when the lights were turned on for the first time in the first park — wherever that was.

Baseball historian Dan Schlossberg has researched this matter, and in his volume *The Baseball Catalog*, he points out baseball's first game under the lights was played in 1880 in Nantasket Beach, Mass. The event, which took place on Sept. 2, involved two amateur teams sponsored by rival department stores in that area.

As many may have suspected, the General Electric TV commercial crediting G.E. engineers with instituting night baseball in the U.S. by putting up lights to play a choose-up game in Lynn, Mass. in 1924 was an advertisement with little factual basis.

The first night baseball involving professional teams that Schlossberg's research uncovered was played in 1930 in Independence, Kan., between that city's Western Association minor league club and another team in the league out of Muskogee, Okla. Muskogee emerged victorious, 13-3.

An investigation into the arrival of night baseball in Baton Rouge may now be changing all this. Baseball



Rudolph 'Dolph' Delaroderie

history may have to be rewritten, with our Capital City being provided with yet another claim to fame.

Years ago, former Morning Advocate and State-Times sports editor Bud Montet had the opportunity to engage in a baseball conversation with the late Rudolph "Dolph" Delaroderie (1873-1959) in the Elks Club.

The elderly gentleman, a long-time employee of Gulf States Utilities, told Montet that during his early days with that company around the turn of the century, he helped prepare the old Fair Grounds (now the site of Roseland Terrace subdivision in the Garden District) so night baseball could be played there.

"He told me that they put up poles along the boundary lines to the field and strung up incandescent lights with reflectors," Montet recalls. "I asked him, 'What could they see

with just those incandescent bulbs?' Old Papa Dolph replied, 'Well, they couldn't see very well, but they weren't that good of ballplayers, anyhow!'"

Delaroderie had more to say on this topic when he retired from Gulf States after 58 years of service. In an article which appeared in the June 26, 1953 State-Times, he said the lights were installed so the local Cotton States minor league club could play at night, but he couldn't recollect very many additional details about it.

If Delaroderie was correct in his claim about Cotton States League clubs being the beneficiary of his efforts, it would mean professional baseball was introduced to the night game in Baton Rouge about 30 years earlier than the date officially recognized by the sport.

The State-Times would like to document this event so the keepers of baseball's records can be notified and Baton Rouge can be given its proper place in the annals of baseball history. The date and details about this baseball game are being sought.

Gulf States Utilities has combed its archives in quest of this information, but came up empty. "Our company records simply don't go back that far," says Gulf States spokesperson Pris Gallagher. "However, we talked to a number of our elderly retirees, and many of them recollect hearing about the event."

Perhaps a reader participation project is in order. Those with any information that may be useful in verifying this game are asked to send it to Talkin' Baseball, c/o State-Times, P.O. Box 588, Baton Rouge, La. 70821. The results of this inquiry will be announced on these sports pages at a future date.

This story appeared in the Aug. 9, 1988, edition of the Baton Rouge State-Times and is reprinted with permission. Gulf States employees or retirees with knowledge of this event are asked to lend their assistance.